



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Great Government Through the General Management System – Quality, Timeliness, Value
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

CLASS SPECIFICATION

UNCLASSIFIED

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Class No. 002124

■ CLASSIFICATION PURPOSE

To provide legal counsel and criminal defense services to persons formally charged with a public offense.

■ DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The Public Defender is a one-position executive management class allocated to the Office of the Public Defender. This class is responsible for the management of criminal defense services provided by the Office of the Public Defender. It is distinguished from the Alternate Public Defender in that the latter represents persons who cannot be represented by the Public Defender due to conflict of interest.

■ FUNCTIONS

The examples of functions listed in the class specification(s) are representative but not necessarily exhaustive or descriptive of any one position in the class(es). Management is not precluded from assigning other related functions not listed herein if such duties are a logical assignment for the position.

Essential Functions:

1. Develops legal counsel and representation programs for criminal and other defense services in the County's various courts.
2. Coordinates and directs the public defense program, including mental health conservatorship and juvenile court matters.
3. Negotiates and administers contractual agreements.
4. Receives, evaluates, and assigns cases to departmental staff.
5. Reviews and authorizes expenditures and reimbursements for legal services provided.
6. Evaluates defense services against professional standards and applicable statutes.
7. Coordinates defense services and consults with elected officials, indigent defense advisory panels, judges, probation and parole officers, law enforcement agencies, and the District Attorney concerning policy matters.
8. Analyzes pending legislation and advocates a position on matters affecting the defense system.
9. Determines departmental policies and procedures, and establishes departmental work programs.
10. Develops annual budget, and monitors revenue and expenditure transactions.
11. Conducts fiscal analysis and prepares cost projections.
12. Identifies operational problems and formulates appropriate solutions.
13. Responds to inquiries from the news media and other interested parties.
14. Supervises subordinate staff.
15. Provides high quality service to County employees, representatives of outside agencies and members of the public.

■ KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- The California Penal Code, Evidence Code, Welfare and Institutions Code, and related case law.
- California Rules of the Court and related procedures of San Diego Superior and Municipal Court judicial districts.

- Court proceedings, discovery techniques, jury selection, settlement practices, determinant sentencing laws, and other legal processes related to trial and appellate proceedings.
- Duties, powers, limitations, and responsibilities of a public defender.
- Legal research methodologies.
- Principles and techniques of supervision and training.
- Principles of public administration, including: personnel or human resources management, fiscal management, and accounting.
- The General Management System in principle and in practice.

Skills and Abilities to:

- Plan, organize, direct, evaluate, and establish controls for a comprehensive public defense program.
- Apply legal principles and practices to complex legal cases or problems.
- Prepare legal research and present statements of fact, argument, and recommendations concerning public defense systems and services.
- Establish cooperative work relationships with members of the legal profession, public officials, and court personnel.
- Evaluate defense services for clients of diverse racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Prepare annual budget and monitor expenditures and revenue.
- Negotiate and administer contractual agreements.
- Supervise, train, counsel, and review the work of subordinates.
- Prepare correspondence and reports and establish controls for records management.
- Maintain effective audio-visual discrimination and perception needed for making observations, communicating with others and reading and writing.
- Maintain mental capacity, which allows the capability of making sound decisions and demonstrating intellectual capacities.
- Effectively communicate orally and in writing.

■ EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Education, training, and/or experience that demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed above. An example of the qualifying education/experience is: five (5) years of administrative or supervisory experience over a division of attorneys providing legal counsel and criminal defense services in an Office of the Public Defender or comparable office. Two (2) years of this experience must have been at a management level.

■ SPECIAL NOTES, LICENSES, OR REQUIREMENTS

License

A valid California class C driver's license, which must be maintained throughout employment in this class, is required at time of appointment, or the ability to arrange necessary and timely transportation for field travel. Employees in this class may be required to use their own vehicle.

Certification/Registration

The incumbent must be an active member in good standing with the State Bar of California. The incumbent must have been a practicing attorney in all courts of the State for at least the year preceding appointment.

Working Conditions

Office environment; exposure to computer screens.

Background Investigation

Must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Misdemeanor and/or felony convictions may be disqualifying depending on type, number, severity, and recency. Prior to appointment, candidates will be subject to a background investigation.

Persons serving in positions in the Unclassified Service do not accrue tenure and serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority (Charter of the County of San Diego Section 909.2).

**New: June 25, 1982
Revised: April 7, 1992
Reviewed: Spring 2004**